

Preston Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2022
Preston Plains Cafeteria

Call to Order - John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members

John Moulson - Chairman
Robert Congdon - V. Chairman - excused
Kayla Thompson - Clerk
Stacey Becker
Denise Beale
Zachary Maurice

Alternates

Andrew Sawyer - seated for Bob Congdon
Vacancy

Also Present

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier - Selectwoman
Ken Zachem - Selectman
Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director
Jim Corley - Public Works Director
4 members of the public

2. Public Comment

No one spoke up when first asked for comments, however, the Board obliged and returned to public comment after the Minutes were discussed.

Andy Depta, 6 Youngs Court, representing the Republican Town Committee, stated that the Committee is in full support of Jill Keith filling the vacancy position on the Board of Finance. He also mentioned her experience, business knowledge, and attendance at different Boards and Commission meetings and understands the workings of the town. He mentioned that the other candidate is also qualified, however, he is a relative of a seated member of the Board of Finance which may cause difficulties moving forward.

Nick Vegliante, 359 Old Jewett City Road and Democratic Town Committee Chairman, stated that the Democratic candidate is Robert Catronova, he is qualified with experience in budgeting, finance, purchasing as a Purchasing Agent for the City of Norwich. But if nothing else he should be chosen to uphold the spirit of the law to give the Board multiple party representation. He also stated that by having both a Republican and Democrat alternates that would give the Board flexibility for party representation.

Denise Beale stated that she was confused about the process that the Board was going through that when she first filled a vacancy for the Board it was done during an executive session special meeting and that she was interviewed. And she questioned why that wasn't being done this time.

Ken Zachem, Selectman, stated that past practice and different boards handle things differently. He also stated that some Boards don't allow two people from the same family to serve on the same Board.

Jill Keith, 26 Tanglewood Drive, thanked Andy for his support.

3. Correspondence

- Aug. 23, 2022 - email: Jill Keith regarding Board of Finance and Minority Representation Requirements and a correction to the BoF August Minutes regarding her address.
- Sept. 5, 2022 - email: Robert Castronova regarding his interest in filling the Board of Finance vacancy.
- Sept. 12, 2022 - email: Nicole Serra series of emails regarding Jill Keith's interest in filling the Board of Finance vacancy as well as her resume.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Board of Finance Regular Meeting August 17, 2022

Jill Keith pointed out under Public Comment her address was incorrectly recorded, it should be Tanglewood Dr. not Candlewood.

Stacey Becker motioned to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 17, 2022 as amended. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

5. Financial Reports

a. Board of Education Report

Cindy Varricchio shared that the Board of Education has spent 10% of their budget, a total of \$1,342,311.00. She noted that encumbered salaries are still being reviewed to ensure accuracy. Infinite Vision generates payroll encumbrances based on wages. As part of our review, it was discovered that various budget line items may need to be adjusted, such as, long-term substitutes is being projected higher than what was budgeted, and teacher salaries which is projected to be lower. We want to plan accordingly.

The Board of Education is exploring the need to relocate the Central Office for the 2023-2024 school year to accommodate additional students that will move up into PPMS. The Board is beginning to plan for the 2023-2024 budget.

1. Board of Education Liaison Report - Zach Maurice

Zach Maurice reported that the Board of Education is getting ready for the auditors visit on Nov. 2-3rd, hopefully they will nail down what exactly is an encumbrance and what is not. He also shared the Board is looking into a new central office for 2023-4 due to continuing increase in enrollment and required space at the school. They are looking at possible off site locations within town.

b. Town Revenue Report

Cindy Varricchio reported that revenues collected are 100.4% of budget and that expenditures are at 98.2%. Her report showed that revenues are \$68,939 over budget and that \$311,668 remains in the budget. Once again the Fund Balance monies were not used for the 2021-2022 budget. There isn't a final report because we are still waiting to receive the Housing Pilot Payment and a Library Grant to ensure we are reporting all the Revenues that the Town has received.

Because of the timing of the referendum taxes have not been listed yet. At this point staff is making sure that entries into the system are accurate and do not need corrections. We're following the corrective plan given to us by the auditors so that future audits will go smoothly and that our booking keeping is accurate. There are a few places where numbers are not matching or making sense. It's just because of timing.

c. Town Expenditure Report

Cindy Varricchio shared the first month of this fiscal year brought with it the implementation of account numbers that are compliant with the State of Connecticut Chart of Accounts. As a result, there was a delay in entering revenue transactions into Infinite Vision as they ensured that the new account codes were used.

Ms. Varricchio also noted that in expenditures there are two transactions that have been typically recorded in the General Fund and then moved later. To ensure best practices, steps will be taken in the future to ensure they are recorded in their appropriate fund at the time of the transaction rather than in the General Fund.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that they are still paying a few 2022 bills, and that the projected return to the town remains the same as previously predicted, \$45,000.

6. Old Business

a. Board of Finance Alternate Vacancy

There was a brief discussion as to how to proceed. Denise Beale reiterated her concern that the decision was not being done at a special meeting. Stacey Becker stated that in the Handbook for Connecticut Board of Finance on page 5-6, it states to fill a vacancy, it must occur at a Special Meeting.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to schedule a Special Meeting of Board of Finance on October 19 at 7:00 P.M. to discuss the Board's vacancy. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

b. Planning and Zoning Commission Request for Review of Board of Finance Goals in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

There was a brief discussion as to what they needed to do with the 10-year-old POCD goals. It was pointed out that none of the present members were a part of making the 2014 goals. It was pointed out that they needed to look at each goal that was set in 2014 and decide did the Town or Board did reach that goal or not, and is it still a relevant and current goal. Any goals set, should have a one or two sentence explanation of how that goal can be obtained. It was decided that Chairman John Moulson will speak to Kathy Warzecha before the next meeting and ask her to attend or get more guidance on the expectation of reviewing and setting POCD goals.

c. LOTCIP Appropriation -Adjustment

Cindy Varricchio explained that after checking with the auditors that moving forward funds can't just be allocated from the Fund Balance, they need to be appropriated funds to a designated account number. She then gave three different ways that this could be done while continuing to follow best practices.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to amend the current general budget for a supplemental appropriation of \$11,500 to the Public Works Professional & Technical Line 10-72.4300.4303.5301. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

d. Board of Finance Laptop

It was reported that Cindy Varricchio and Kayla Thompson met and that Kayla would be receiving a new laptop for the Board of Finance to use by the end of the month.

7. New Business

a. Fire Department FEMA Grant Application

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared with the Board that the Fire Department has received a \$45,000 grant and that they will be purchasing 3 CPR Compression Machines. The machines are strapped to a person's chest and automatically compresses the chest performing CPR so fire fighters aren't doing that very strenuous job for the required 20 minutes. The grant was approved 2 weeks ago. It is a matching grant and the Town's portion is \$2,285.72. She explained that Fire Chief Wucik will be using funds from his New Equipment Line Item to pay the Town's

portion. Ms. Allyn-Gauthier shared that she wanted the Board of Finance to be aware of this expenditure so that if the Fire Department falls short of funds they realize why.

b. Public Works Trailer Bid Waiver

Jim Corley explained that originally this item was part of the Capital Plan and then it was decided that ARPA funds could be used to make the purchase. Like when purchasing a vehicle, it's important to move quickly. He pointed out that he is struggling to comply with the purchasing regulations and make a purchase. He is presently looking at trailers and has found a few in his price range, which is a maximum of \$20,000. However by the time he follows the purchasing guidelines the item is sold. He stated that a blanket bid waiver would allow him to move quickly and secure the desired item.

He fielded a few questions from the Board about the purchase - like range of cost, new vs. used.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to approve a blanket bid waiver for Public Works up to \$20,000 for the purchase of a trailer. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

c. Draft Budget Calendar

Cindy Varricchio stated that to follow Best Practices and to have tax bills mailed out on time that they are looking to move the standard calendar that was followed last year ahead by about 3 weeks. By doing this it allows for glitches and unforeseen delays, but still allows time to complete the budget process including the referendum early enough to generate and mailed out tax bills on time. By ensuring that tax bills go out to the taxpayers on time means that taxpayers won't be inundating the Tax Collector and her office with unnecessary calls and complaints of the lateness of bills.

John Moulson stated that it's prudent to ensure that bills go out so tax collection can begin in July.

d. ClearGov Bid Waiver

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier pointed out that this is a program that Ledyard already uses and that they have had good reviews from their citizens. She stressed that it's not an additional financial software. She then turned the presentation over to Cindy Varricchio who has used the program before.

Ms. Varricchio shared that ClearGov is a program that allows the Town a way to share financial information with the citizens of the Town. It's clear, it's easy to use, and gives taxpayers real time access to how their tax dollars are being spent. She then pointed out and explained several key components to the program. Operational Budget would allow for easier budget

building and would allow collaboration between departments as line items are edited. Digital Budget Book can automate summary pages, meets GFOA criteria, and uses easy-to-use templates to create consistency between all departments. Transparency is created when information is shared and can build community trust. Capital Budgeting would eliminate manual spreadsheets to convey information and would effortlessly produce professional, website-based project pages to share with the public. It could also show each Capital Project as it is in progress and where funding is from. ClearGov also has a forecasting component that would allow it to estimate projected costs on future Capital expenditures. A great tool when making decisions about a 5- or 10-year Capital Plan.

The timeline of implementation was shared with the Board along with how it would be paid for. There is a one time start up fee of \$1,560. The Oct. 2022 to June 30, 2023 subscription services fee is \$9,676.65 and the July 1, 2023 to June 2024 subscription services fee is \$12,900.87. There is a 15% discount applied if the Board of Education joins as well. The first year can be paid with LoCIP funds which currently has a balance of \$203,507.46. It falls under the LoCIP guidelines for Technology Upgrades - including for improvement to expand public access to government information through electronic portals and kiosks.

Initially what is needed from the Board of Finance is a bid waiver to purchase the first year. The Board of Education will be voting on this at their Oct. 3rd meeting.

There was a brief discussion of the cost of various subscriptions with and without Board of Education's use, and at what point it would become a line item in the budget.

Andrew Sawyer motioned to approve a bid waiver to ClearGov for the first year subscription. Kayla Thompson seconded the motion. John Moulson, Kayla Thompson, Stacey Becker, Zach Maurice, and Andrew Sawyer voted in favor of the motion; while Denise Beale opposed the motion. The motion was carried 5 to 1.

Update on Bridge Applications

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier updated the Board on the Bridge Application. She shared that it was a matching grant and that Parks Road bridge has a cost of 2.9 million dollars and that Cook Town Road bridge will cost 2.7 million dollars for a total of 5.6 million. Due to the new Infrastructure Bill that just passed the projects will be 100% funded. Ms. Allyn-Gauthier stressed the importance of having shovel ready projects lined up so that as funds become available the Town can apply.

Board members shared that they felt the many grants that Town has received needs to be shared with the Townspeople via the website so they realize how much money is coming into town to save their tax dollars. The discussion then turned to the upcoming Capital Plan. With the influx of state and federal grants many items that were on the Capital Plan have been paid

for. It was pointed out that now is not the time to refinance loans and that a municipal advisor will give rates of loans that are available and evaluate the best course of action.

8. Public Comment

Jill Keith, 26 Tanglewood Drive, commended Cindy and Sandra's efforts to ensure the budget is passed in a timely manner by creating a Budget Calendar. She also thought that ClearGov is a forward thinking way to inform all the citizens of Preston as to what is happening with the Town's monies.

9. Adjournment

Kayla Thompson motioned to adjourn at 8:47 P.M. Andrew Sawyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary